Telman Ibrahimov
PhD in Art, leading Researcher
Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

A.U. POPE "THE MYTH OF THE ARMENIAN DRAGON CARPETS"…
ПОЧЕМУ СТАТЬЯ ПОУПА НЕ ДАЕТ ПОКОЯ АРМЯНСКИМ ПРОДАВЦАМ КОВРОВ

После **Abstract** приводится полный текст оригинальной статьи A.U.POPE " THE MYTH OF THE ARMENIAN DRAGON CARPETS"

ABSTRACT

Исследуя происхождение, развитие и исчезновение Кавказских драконовых ковров я конечно же должен был выйти на статью видного исследователя и коллекционера Восточного искусства Arthur Upham Pope's **"The Myth of the Armenian Dragon Carpets"** опубликованную в Yearbook of Asian Art 1925 г. в Берлине. Статья представляет собой достаточно аргументированное мнение A.U. Pope о том, что тиражируемое мнение об армянском происхождение Кавказских драконовых ковров есть не что иное – как миф.

Не буду говорить о высоком профессионализме и научной обьективности A.U. Pope's. Его фундаментальные труды сами говорят за себя. Но поразительным является то, что сразу же после публикации им этой статьи и до сегодняшних дней армянские торговцы коврами и оплаченные ими «эксперты» по Восточным коврам, с невероятным упорством уже много лет опровергают мнение A.U. Pope и пытаются доказать, что драконовые ковры все же имеют армянское происхождение.

В течение 97 лет в различных публикациях о Восточных коврах, периодически печатаются статьи армянских авторов и авторов, оплаченных армянами - опровержения статьи A.U. Pope. Сколько за это время было потрачено ими внимания, усилий, гонораров, коррупционных подарков и откровенных взяток, чтобы организовать многочисленный «хор» доказывающих обратное.

За 97 лет, на одну статью A.U. Pope опубликовано 27 прямых опровержений на различных языках и около 30 опровержений (также на различных языках), в которых точка зрения A.U. Pope критикуется эпизодически, в связи с Драконовыми коврами Закавказья.

Из длинного списка ангажированных статей-опровержений приведу только 4. Остальные – просто пропагандистский мусор. Среди этих четырех статей самой отвратительной и жалкой является статья Gerald Pollio (University of Sussex, Department of Busines and Management) который является специалистом по финансам и написал только одну единственную статью о Восточных коврах, и эта статья - опровержение A.U. Pope.

1. Sakisian Armenag - Syria. Revue D'Art Oriental et D"Archeologie. Les Tapis A Dragons Et Leur Origine Armenienne. Tom IX, Paris 1928, pp. 243-256

2. Kurdian H. Corrections to Arthur Upham Pope's "The Myth of the Armenian Dragon Carpets". The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, No. 1, Jan., 1940. pp. 65-67. Cambridge University Press

3. Dickran Kouymjian The Berlin Dragon-Phoenix Carpet and its Probable Armenian Origin. Armenian Rugs and Textiles. An Overview of Examples from Four Centuries, Exhibition catalogue, Vienna: Armenian Rugs Society, 2014, pp. 16-31.

4. Gerald Pollio Reconsidering dragon carpet origins. Studies in historical textiles. Conservar Património 31, Lisboa. ARP Associação Profissional de Conservadores-Restauradores de Portugal. May 2019. pp.17-30

«РУКОПИСИ НЕ ГОРЯТ», А ЦЕННЫЕ РУКОПИСИ – ТЕМ БОЛЕЕ !!!

THE MYTH OF THE ARMENIAN DRAGON CARPETS

By ARTHUR UPHAM POPE
Mit 6 Abb. auf Tafel 93—95

The appearance in Vienna about thirty five years ago of an imposing carpet of primitive design belonging to Theodor Graff[1] set a perplexing problem to rug scholars. It provoked, at first, rather fantastic speculations. These were then apparently set definitely at rest by the appearance of Dr. F. R. Martin's notable book on rugs[2] with its striking and confident argument that the rugs of this type were woven in Armenia, the oldest of them as early as the Thirteenth Century. Dr. Martin's book, perhaps because it was so welcome with its wealth of material and its stimulating suggestions, was never subjected to a really searching review by anyone and his theory of the Armenian origin of these carpets was, in print at least, everywhere accepted. No less than a dozen writers (peccavi) including practically everyone of note in the field adopted Martin's view with but slight qualifications, although Dr. Sarre[3] from the first objected to the early dating and correctly placed these weavings in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.

It was not until after fifteen years of this uncritical acceptance of the Armenian theory that it was seriously challenged in print. Herr Heinrich Jacoby[4] made a strong attack on the entire position and not only demolished some of Martin's arguments but cited good reasons for placing these carpets in the Caucasus. His criticism, however, has apparently been without effect, several publications having repeated the Armenian attribution without taking any account of Jacoby's argument. Gaston Migeon[5], for example in his recent admirable Catalogue of Muhammadan Art in the Louvre in his introduction to the section on carpets, speaks of the Armenian attribution as if it were an accepted fact. The Breck-Morris Catalogue of the Ballard Collection[6] now in the Metropolitan Museum, states "These considerations" (that one carpet has an Armenian inscription and that the work shows peasant or nomad character) "make plausible the hypothesis now generally accepted, that the home of the Dragon rugs is Armenia," and the illustrations of the Ballard pieces are labelled "Armenian" without qualification. Mr. Kendrick, having previously defended the Armenian hypothesis[7], in his most recent publication[8] after admitting that the Armenian attribution is not fully proven, says: "the designation Armenian is as near as we can get" and the captions for the illustrations read "Armenian or Northwest Persian".

Yet notwithstanding this wide and persistent acceptance of Martin's theory, a systematic and critical examination of the arguments shows them to be almost wholly

---

[1] Now in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. Illustrated Orientalische Teppiche, Wien 1892—1896, Tafel XXVI, also Bode-Kuehnel, Vorderasiatische Knüpfteppiche aus älterer Zeit, 3. Auflage, Abb. 55 English transl. Dr. R. M. Riefstahl, N. Y. 1922.

[2] F. R. Martin, A History of Oriental Carpets Before 1800. London 1908.

[3] Meisterwerke Muhammedanischer Kunst, Leipzig 1912, Vol. I, Die Teppiche, S. IV.

[4] Heinrich Jacoby, Eine Sammlung orientalischer Teppishe, Berlin 1922. The Dragon carpets were published as from the Caucasus, although without detailed argument by Arthur Upham Pope, Oriental Rugs as Fine Art, International Studio, N. Y. 1922, and in another series „Values in Oriental Rugs", Arts and Decoration, N. Y. 1922.

[5] Gaston Migeon, L'Orient Musulman, Paris 1924. Tome II.

[6] Joseph Breck and Frances Morris, The James F. Ballard Collection of Oriental Rugs. N. Y. 1923, p. XXII.

[7] A. F. Kendrick and C. Tattersall, Hand Woven Carpets Oriental and European. London 1922. p. 15.

[8] Kendrick and Tattersall, Fine Carpets in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London 1924, Introduction.

without substance. The entire evidence, presumably cumulative, so far advanced is as follows:

1. That rugs were woven at an early date in Armenia is indicated by records showing that certain Armenian kings in the thirteenth century used rugs as part of annual tribute payments[9].
2. Marco Polo states that in the Thirteenth Century the finest carpets in the world were woven in Armenia. (Martin.)
3. A carpet of this type has been found with an Armenian inscription and date expressly affirming that the rug was made by an Armenian. (Martin, Kendrick, Breck-Morris et al.)
4. There is to be found in these rugs a violet color which is peculiar to Armenia and which is made from the Kermes insect which is also peculiar to Armenia. (Martin.)
5. Importers and dealers unanimously report that these carpets were collected in Armenia and that pieces were found in Armenian churches. (Martin).
6. Inasmuch as carpets of the type early found their way to Europe (Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries) they must have come from readily accessible districts such as Armenia. (Kendrick.)
7. The peasant or nomadic character of the work points to Armenia. (Breck-Morris).

To discuss these points in turn:

1. Nothing can be inferred as to the origin of these rugs from the fact that an Armenian king used rugs as part payment of tribute. Rugs have for many centuries been articles of common exchange in western Asia, acceptable practically anywhere almost as readily as money, and the Armenians could have secured plenty of them from the nomad tribes with whom they were in contact and some of whom they probably taxed in some way in return for privileges of pasturage or transit. That these nomad tribes were making rugs and that rugs were used as tribute or as propitiatory gifts is shown by the present of Ali Beg, ruler of Karaman, of eighteen rugs made by Yuruks or nomads, to Murad I in July 1377[10]. The argument from tribute furnishes no evidence that the dragon carpets or any other kind of carpet were woven in Armenia.
2. The statements of Marco Polo lend no support whatever to the theory in question. Martin quotes[11] him as saying "In the province of Turkomania they weave the finest and handsomest carpets in the world". Martin then adds: "This statement must refer to the eastern portion of Asia Minor, the mountainous regions between Sivas, Diarbakir and Van where he was travelling at the end of the Thirteenth Century." The "must" is purely imaginary and specifically contrary to what Marco Polo himself says. So much weight has been placed on this supposed statement of Marco Polo it is worth while to quote the whole passage.

   "In Turcomania there are three classes of people. First there are the Turcomans; these are worshippers of Mahommet, a rude people with an uncouth language of their own. They dwell among mountains and downs where they find good pasturage, for their occupation is cattle keeping . . . The other two classes are the Armenians and the Greeks, who live mixt with the former in the towns and villages occupying themselves with trade and handicrafts. They

[9] The Gotchnag, Vol. (Exact reference at writing unrecoverable).

[10] A. Karabacek, Die Persische Nadelmalerei Susanchird, p. 102, Footnote 85. Quoted also by Jacoby, op. cit. s. 1.

[11] Martin, op. cit. p. 105.

weave the finest and handsomest carpets in the world, and also a great quantity of fine and rich silks of cramoisy and other colours, and plenty of other stuffs. Their chief cities are Conia, Savant and Casaria"[12]. Marco Polo has simply said that the Greeks and Armenians living in central Asia Minor wove very fine rugs. That both Greeks and Armenians readily did take service as artisans meeting the taste and carrying out the orders of the dominant class has long been a commonplace, true in Marco Polo's day and true in many places now. That Marco Polo does not mean Armenia proper in this reference is shown not only by his naming the well known cities of central Asia Minor, but also by his discussion in the following chapter of Greater Armenia which he locates as bounded on the north by Georgiana and on the south by Mosul and whose major city is Arzenga. This corresponds exactly with the Armenia of modern times. The important product here according to Marco Polo is Buckram, the best in the world having been made at that time at Arzinga. There is some doubt as to what this buckram was. But in any case it had nothing to do with rugs and since Marco did mention carpets when he found them, the omission here is significant evidence that he did not find them being woven in Armenia. Instead of supporting the Armenian theory the comments of Marco Polo tend to disprove it.

3. It is true that a carpet of this general type, which was offered to the South Kensington Museum about twenty years ago, contained an inscription in Armenian reading as follows:[13] "I, Gohar, full of sin and feeble of soul have knotted this with my own hands. May he who reads pray for my soul. In the year 1129." (Armenian Calendar, A. D. 1679) This inscription indicates of course that this particular rug was woven by an Armenian but furnishes no evidence that this whole class of rugs is of Armenian design or workmanshigp. Armenians have for centuries been scattered over the whole of the Near East; they are skilful craftsmen, adaptable and quick to learn, and wherever they have been they have worked at the various trades and crafts local to the district in which they found themselves, carrying out the designs and working according to the technique established there. This is as true of Tabriz, Kaisarieh and Constantinople of our day as it was of the Konia of Marco Polo's day as many Armenian inscriptions on all kinds of work from Mosul bronzes to Kutaiah pottery show. That Armenian inscriptions can appear on rugs that are not in any true sense Armenian is shown by the Armenian inscription on a rug from the Kuba region of the Eastern Caucasus belonging to Robert Hayes Smith of San Francisco (Illustration 1) and a fragment of a Persian carpet illustrated by Martin[14].

The appearance of inscriptions in languages other than that of the district in which the carpet was woven is fairly common. Dr. Wallace Smith of San Francisco owns a typical Daghestan rug with a Russian inscription; in the Yerkes Collection there was a so-called Damascus prayer rug (now in the collection of George Hewitt Myers of Washington) with a Jewish inscription[15] and in the Pardo collection in Paris there is a Kula prayer rug also with a Jewish inscription. Examples could easily be multiplied.

The importance of the Gohar rug with its Armenian inscription is considerably minimized by the very similar carpet in the Kaiser Friederich Museum which also

[12] Sir Henry Yule, Book of Marco Polo. London 1874. Vol. I, p. 45 f.
[13] Translation given in Kendrick and Tattersall, Hand Woven Carpets, p. 15.
[14] Martin, op. cit. Fig. 209.
[15] John Kimberly Mumford, The Yerkes Collection of Oriental Carpets, N. Y. 1910, Plate II.

has apparently Armenian inscription. These two rugs are so close that the identity of their provenance can not be disputed. But the inscription on the Kaiser Friederich carpet baffles all attempts to decipher it. Its letters are so imperfect that they are meaningless. Probably since the rug is well drawn and the inscripton is plainly not decorative but clearly intended for information or record, it is the work of a person unfamiliar with the language he was trying to use. It is not probable that an Armenian weaver working in Armenia for an Armenian patron surrounded by literate Armenian workmen could have so far missed the elementary requirements of a few letters. It is more likely that some non-Armenian weaver was trying to imitate Armenian letters by visual memory unaided by understanding or help from associates. Moreover the drawing of the letters, their crowding, rectangularity and fragmentation have at least a superficial resemblance to many inscriptions on Caucasus rugs.

A far more significant inscription which further nulifies the supposedly unique importance of the Gohar signature appears on a Dragon Carpet in the George Hewitt Meyers collection (Illustration 2). It reads "In the sacred month of Muharram in the year 1101 (1689 A. D.) Husain Bêk. His servant" (i. e. Allah's)[16]. Here is the signature of a Muhammadan weaver of Turkish stock, the race that probably introduced knotted weaving into Western Asia, a race that did not do miscellaneous work for a great variety of masters but who worked for themselves and wove their own rugs. This signature is all the more significant because of its agreement with a very definite tradition, persisting at least until very recently in the Caucasus, that the Dragon carpets were woven by a small tribe of people of Turkish stock that came around the northern end of the Caspian Sea into the Caucasus in the Thirteenth Century, fleeing before the pressure of Timur and bringing with them Chinese patterns which had earlier been introduced into Central Asia by the Mongols[17]. From the rug woven by Gohar we can infer little or nothing but the rug woven by Husein Bêk gives us our first documentary clue, slender but real, to the origin of these carpets.

4. As to the argument from the dyes, Martin says[18] that he found an Armenian manuscript dated 1201 "designed and colored with the same tints and combination of colorings as occur in these carpets, above all the so characteristic violet kirmiz tint that is not known in any other region, and is peculiar to the Armenian mountainous districts. This kirmiz was since very oldest times quite characteristic of these districts[19]." If Dr. Martin means that the special shade of violet that is found in the Dragon carpets (very deep in the early pieces and much lighter in the later ones) is "not known in any other region" he is mistaken for the color which is missing in some of the Dragon carpets, such as the Graf rug for instance, is very common in various Caucasus rugs, particularly in the Kazaks and a fine kind of Daghestan (called Kabistan in the trade) as well as the flat woven Shemakas, in one of which (owned by Demotte of Paris) the entire ground color of the field is exactly the shade of violet found in the early dragon pieces. The color also appears, but rather more rarely, in rugs from Shirvan, very often in rugs from the Karabagh district and even well into the Kurdish district, appearing as a conspicous feature on the so-called Garden carpets. Less frequently it

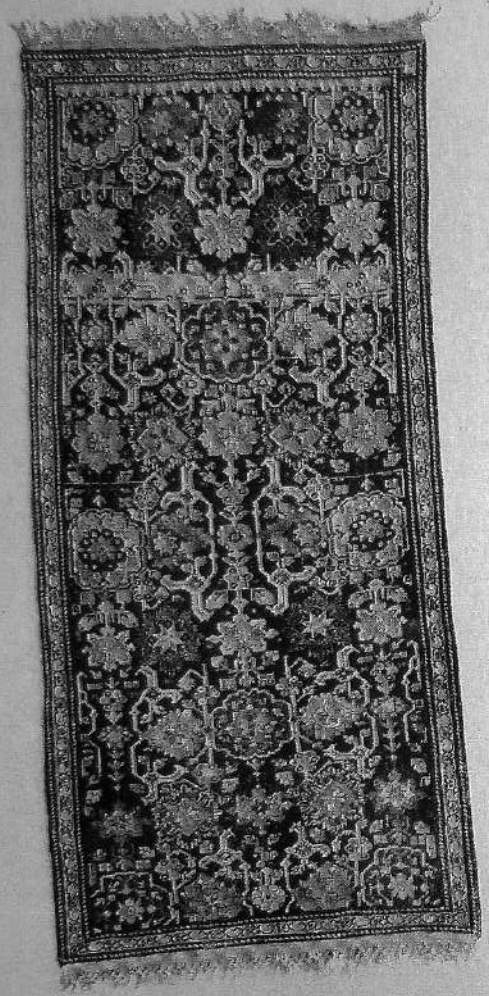
[16] I am indebted to Prof. William Popper of the University of California for this reading.
[17] I am indebted to Mr. Cerof Filippo of New York for information concerning this tradition which he acquired in the Caucasus about twenty five years ago.
[18] Martin, op. cit. p. 118.
[19] Martin, op. cit. p. 105.

Illus. 2. Dragon carpet with arabic inscription. Dated 1689 A. D.

George Hewitt Myers, Washington.

Illus. 3. Embroidery from the Kuba district. 18th century.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Illus. 1. Rug from the Kuba district with Armenian inscription.

Robert Hays Smith, San Francisco

Illus. 3. Carpet showing relation to the Kasak rugs. Late 17th or early 18th centuries.

Mrs. Rita Lydig, New York.

Illus. 4. So-called Kabistan carpet with Drag on carpet design 18th century.

Charles E. Gibson, Boston.

appears in some of the nomadic rugs that are brought to market on the west coast of Asia Minor in Melas and Bergamo as well as in a few of the nomadic rugs produced in the eastern part of the country. In most of the latter the violet dye fades rapidly and almost entirely but it seems to hold fast in the best Melas and Bergamo pieces. The so-called Bergamo rugs certainly have close affiliations with the Caucasus region. But the matter of dyes and colors in these rugs has been so thoroughly discussed by Jacoby[20], and Martin's contention so finally disposed of that there is no need to repeat the arguments here. The facts necessitate the conclusion that the violet tone found in many Dragon carpets is no evidence whatever of Armenian authorship, but points if any where to another region, the Caucasus.

5. The fifth argument was that Dr. Martin had succeeded, after much inquiry from the dealers and importers, in ascertaining that all of the rugs in question "come from the most inaccessible districts of what is now Armenia"[21] and that they had been found in churches and old families there. A perhaps equally persistent enquiry among many of the dealers and importers of Constantinople, Paris, London and New York, confined to those who had personally been in these regions and who had actually secured carpets of the dragon type there disclosed almost unanimously a quite contrary view. Only one of the dealers questioned had first hand knowledge of a rug of the dragon type coming out of Armenia, while the others were all confident that rugs of this type must have been produced somewhere in the Caucasus, probably in the vicinity of Kuba[22]. These inquiries were made carefully, precautions being taken to avoid prejudicing the replies. The evidence of the dealers and importers, in short, by no means supports the Armenian theory but rather points definitely to the Caucasus as the place where these rugs were woven. No doubt Dragon carpets have been found in Armenian churches and in the possession of Armenian families. Because of the rather ordinary material out of which they were constructed and because of the coarseness of the weave[23] which would permit of rapid work they were during the time of their production undoubtedly the cheapest large carpets available in the entire region, a consideration not likely to be ignored by the Armenians of the time. The medallion carpets of Northwest Persia, woven probably in the region of Karabagh, must have been far most costly. But even though a few Dragon carpets may have found their way into Armenia, the fact would indicate almost nothing as to the origin of the type. Rugs have a great penchant for travelling, Caucasus carpets having been found even in churches in Jerusalem, and we get no indications concerning provenance from the location where rugs are acquired until a large or preponderating number is found in one region.

---

[20] Jacoby, op. cit. p. 40.

[21] Martin, op. cit. p. 116.

[22] Among the dealers questioned were Indoudjian Freres and S. Pardo of Paris, E. Beghian of London, S. Kent Costikyan, Mr. Keeler of Altmans and C. Filippo of New York. Indoudjians reports the purchase of Dragon carpets with Dragons in Van but also in Tiflis and many in Baku and Kuba. Mr. Pardo acquired all of those that he found in the Near East in Tiflis. Mr. Costikyan reports that he acquired two carpets of the type in Tiflis, one in Tabriz and more than a half dozen in Baku. The other reports were similar. It should be remembered that Tiflis has for many years been the great market for rugs from the entire region and that probably more Caucasus rugs have been sold there than in Baku itself.

[23] The carpets apparently only very rarely reach a fineness as high as 100 knots to the inch. Even the Graf carpet is scarcely 90 while most of the class are under 85, some being as low as 75.

6. „One argument in favor of this attribution (to Armenia) is the existence of such examples in Italy" writes Mr. Kendrick[24]. „The Armenian region was conveniently situated for transit, having access to the Black Sea." Again we have an argument intended to support the Armenian hypothesis but which in fact again points to the Caucasus. Accessibility is not a matter of political boundaries or even miles, but is essentially a matter of terrain and the passage from such Armenian centers as Erivan, Kars, Van, Bitlis or even Ezerum to the Black Sea is one of much difficulty, whereas, on the contrary, none of the regions beyond the coasts of Asia Minor were so accessible to European traders as the Caucasus. Traffic from Baku through Elizavetpol and Tiflis to Poti and Bâtum has always been easy and that the route was early used for the importation of rugs into Europe is shown by the frequent appearance in European paintings of the Fifteenth Century[25] of rugs with the double row of hooked polygons and other types that are still common in the vicinity of Elizavetpol or Gandje today.
7. According to the catalogue of the Ballard Collection, written by Mr. Breck and Miss Morris of the Metropolitan Museum[26] the peasant or nomad character of these carpets supports the Armenian theory. Of course this argument was never meant to stand alone but in view of the fact that as many nomads and peasants live in the Caucasus as in Armenia, to cite only one region, it is difficult to see why in any setting the fact should be supposed to indicate Armenia.

In short, all of the arguments so far advanced that are supposed to prove that Dragon carpets were woven in Armenia turn out upon examination to be without value and some of them, indeed, tend to disprove the very thesis they were supposed to support.

But not only has no substantial argument yet been published in behalf of an Armenian origin for the Dragon carpets, but there are good reasons for thinking that carpets of this type could not have been woven there. In the first place there is no record nor even any local tradition that rug weaving was ever carried on in Armenia to any extent. When the Armenian theory was first propounded no one was more delighted and surprised than the Armenians themselves, many of whom, born and brought up in various parts of Armenia, confessed that they had never heard of Armenian rugs. Moreover, if these Dragon carpets are really Armenian why cannot we find some trace of their patterns or at least some affiliation with them in the various decorative arts that we know are Armenian? There is nothing in the architectural ornament nor in the various Armenian textiles or paintings that shows any direct connection with the characteristic patterns of the Dragon carpets; and if anyone has found miniatures or illuminations which carry similar decorative idioms they should be published. That a slow, elaborate and difficult art like rug weaving could have grown up in Armenia without showing relations to contemporary and allied arts it difficult to believe.

But the case against the attribution of the Dragon carpets to Armenia does not rest on negative criticism only. There is fortunately, at least one genuine Armenian carpet in existence which holds true to Armenian style and is as distinctively the product of Armenian aesthetic tradition as anything that has come out of the country. This is the carpet belonging to Herr Wilhelm Holzman of Berlin[27]. (Illustration 6.) This

[24] Kendrick and Tattersall, op. cit. p. 15.
[25] For example, Van Eyck's Portrait of Jan Arnolfini and his Wife, in the National Gallery, London.
[26] Joseph Breck and Frances Morris, op. cit. p. XXII.
[27] I am greatly indebted to Dr. Kuehnel for bringing this carpet to my attention and to Herr Holzmann for allowing it to be illustrated.

rug (2 metres long by 1,55 metres wide) is in the tapestry or Khilim stitch very closely woven of excellent quality of wool. The outlines of the arabesques and the inscription are worked in a very fine gold thread. The purely decorative inscription on the border consists of a group of Russian, Armenian and Kufic lettres repeated twenty two times. The colors in both their specific tone as well as their ensemble are quite unlike the color schemes of other Asiatic rugs. The dull crimson of the arabesque are shown against a soft violet red ground, the famous Kirmiz, but here of a richer deeper tone, less bluish, than the color that appears on the Dragon carpets.

Not much argument is needed to prove that this is a real Armenian rug. All of the devices used in it and the whole manner of drawing are to be found in Armenian miniatures and illuminations [28]. That no other rugs of this type have been recorded is in itself evidence that rug weaving as practiced in Armenia by Armenians and for Armenians and in Armenian style was an extremely rare art.

Quite as fatal to the Armenian theory, and also to the theory sometimes advanced that the rugs come from Northwest Persia or eastern Asia Minor, is the mass of evidence that points to the Caucasus as the place of their origin. This evidence can be only briefly indicated here.

The first step necessary to any final decision as to the provenance of these carpets is to define the class itself more strictly than has been done. To do this satisfactorily would involve the publication of many transitional and border line examples and also detailed analytical tables of the technique of the weaving which, after all, comes very near having the last word in such a problem. Such an undertaking is not feasible here but the general trend of the argument can be indicated.

To the first group, on the whole the most beautiful and containing the largest number of early pieces, should be assigned among others the following; the carpet belonging to the Collection of the late C. F. Williams [29] of Norristown Pennsylvania and a similar piece belonging to Mr. P. M. Sharples [30] of Westchester, Pennsylvania; the carpet that was in the Munich Exposition now in the possession of Altman and Company [31], New York; a piece in the Boston Museum of fine Arts and the similar piece in the Ballard Collection in the Metropolitan Museum [32]; the superb fragment formerly in the Lamn Collection now in the possession of Mr. George Hewitt Myers [33] of Washington; the carpet belonging to Mrs. D. C. Jackling [34] of San Francisco; the piece in the Museum for Kunst and Industry in Vienna; the one owned by Mr. Harry Payne Bingham [35] of New York and a piece with several borders, somewhat later than the rest which belongs to Mr. John D. Mc Ilhenny [36] of Philadelphia. Most of these pieces are on a glowing rose red ground. All of these rugs have in addition to other important diagnostic features, powerfully drawn palmettes, deeply and sharply serrated. If they have animal figures in addition to the Dragons they are not conspicuous and are generally placed on the interior of the narrower leaf forms.

[28] For a quite similar use of arabesques see, for example, Ferd. Macler, Documents d'art Armenienes, Paris 1924, Fig. 1 (b).

[29] Illustrated W. R. Valentiner, Early Oriental Rugs N. Y. 1910, No. 2 and Catalog of a Loan Exhibition of Asia Minor Carpets held at the Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia 1919.

[30] Illustrated Bode-Kuehnel op. cit. Abb. 56; also Valentiner, op. cit. No. 3, op. cit. Pennsylvania, op. cit.

[31] Meisterwerke Muhammedanischer Kunst, Kat. Nr. 92, Tafel 65; also Jacoby, op. cit.

[32] Breck-Morris, op. cit.

[33] Illustrated Martin, op. cit. Plate XXVIII.

[34] Illustrated Martin, op. cit. Fig. 295.

[35] Illustrated, Catalog Loan Collection of Oriental Rugs, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1920.

[36] Illustrated Valentiner, op. cit. No. 4, Pennsylvania Museum, op. cit. Cleveland Museum, op. cit.

To a second somewhat different group, perhaps woven in an adjoining locality, but of quite the same general type, belong first of all the famous Graf carpet of the Kaiser Friederich Museum the earliest rug of all and which seems to combine the aesthetic merits of both classes; the smaller and simpler carpet that hangs beside it; a magnificent large fragment, about four fifths complete owned by M. Gabriel Hanataux of Paris; the Simkovitch [37] carpet now in the possession of J. Zadoo Noorian of New York; one of the carpets in the Victoria & Albert Museum [38] and one of the Ballard carpets now in the Metropolitan. Although the border is a little different and although there are indications that the rug is decidedly later than most of the others, none the less the dated rug belonging to Mr. George Hewitt Myers (Illustration) should be included in this group.

These carpets are lighter in tone than those of the first class and the color scheme is a little different. They have more animals and they are more conspicuously placed; pairs of running deer [39] being especially in evidence and ducks appear on several pieces; the frequently have T'che forms, some of which have been turned into realistic snails. Most of them have rigid trees with honey comb looking foliage and all have the same border consisting of diagonally opposed pairs of thick arabesques, separated by an oblique leaf form which alternates with a decorated square and sometimes an oblique lotus as well. These rugs are more coarsely woven than those of the first class and nearly all have a heavier foundation.

The third group consists of a large number of examples. The most important piece is the carpet signed by Gohar with its border almost exactly like the border of the Jackling piece, although, like all the other patterns on the rug, much later in form. In addition to this there is the very similar rug in the Kaiser Friederich Museum with its pseudo Armenian inscription, discussed above; the carpet belonging to Mrs. Rita Lydig of New York (Illustration); the rug illustrated in Martin labelled „Armenian About 1800" [40] although the rug is almost certainly of earlier date; the pieces illustrated by Jacoby (Tafeln 10 and 11) and many other of the class both in European and American collections that have not been deemed important enough for publication. Techinically these rugs are similar to those of the second group; they come in a considerable variety of sizes, many relatively small pieces being known, and although nearly always on a rose red ground some have been found in blue and a very few on brilliant yellow. In design they are marked by a great increase in the relative size of the component designs, the commonest and dominating pattern being a huge ovoid palmette. The lattice-like leaves of the first and second group are here much shortened and blunted and are curved around the palmette. Often as in the Lydig carpet these leaves have lost their serrations altogether. The process of a gradual but continuous elimination of unintelligible forms is already well underway and in this third group we find considerable simplification and regularization of the patterns. The Dragons have disappeared and along with them much of the eccentric and confused animal drawing that is especially common in rugs of the second group. These pieces are for the most part in better condition than those of either the first

[37] Illustrated with comments by Dr. R. M. Riefstahl, Catalog of the Simkovitch Sale, Anderson Galleries, N. Y. 1921.

[38] Illustrated, Kendrick and Tattersall, op. cit. Plate 8.

[39] On the Sassanian rock carving at Tak-i-Bostan, there is a running deer with the head bent down almost exactly like the running deer on some of the Dragon carpets which because depicted in silhovette with the head projected against the body appears headless.

[40] Martin, op. cit. Plate XXIX.

or second group and they can with considerable confidence be assigned to the period from 1650 to 1800.

The completion of the technical analyses as well as detailed pattern studies of these carpets may suggest some changes in the above classifications. None the less, although somewhat provisional the suggested grouping represents the essential facts of the situation.

There are a good many border line cases and some rather eccentric examples which might give rise to unessential differences of opinion concerning their exact grouping. There is, for example, the rug with the concentric stepped bands in the Metropolitan Museum [41]. Its extremely primitive appearance might seem to justify an early dating, particularly as some of birds depicted in it resemble the Phoenix in the famous Berlin Dragon and Phoenix carpet [42] or still more the bird in the very similar carpet recently discovered in Sweden. But the excruciating drawing of the animals and trees in the Metropolitan piece and the gross error in centering are marks of crudity rather than genuine primitiveness and although the rug shows a number of differences from the other pieces under consideration, none of these differences have any Armenian character but are rather closely affiliated with a fragment of an animal carpet in the Kaiser Friederich Museum [43] that is undeniably from the Caucasus. Another carpet in the possession of S. Pardo of Paris shows the conventional dragons and other features in customary style, but with the surprising addition of a pair of rather realistic flowering trees under which snakes are coiled resembling the snail-like T'che forms in the Graf rug, only much exagerated. But this rug belongs to a rather late development of the third group of Dragon carpets of which a number undertook the copying of Persian tree and animal rugs and of which many examples are known [44]. But none of these rugs offer insoluable problems and as none of them indicate Armenia the final determination of their exact classification would not affect the validity of the above grouping nor invalidate the argument which aims to show that the Dragon carpets are members of a larger class of rugs than has usually been thought and that a careful analysis of the indsiputable Dragon pieces logically and inevitably leads to an extension of the class to include significant types hitherto somewhat neglected and which throw important light on the earliest examples.

But in order to make sound inferences from the group of Dragon carpets to its later derivatives we must narrow as well as extend the class and exclude pieces that do not really belong to it. For example it has been customary to include with the Dragon carpets a few rugs of archaic pattern which show compartments and cartouches between flowering trees with heavy inclined trunks, rugs worked in tones of rose red, dark blue, turqoise blue, yellow and white. The best known examples of this group are the piece in the collection of the late C. F. Williams [45]; the rug formerly in the Lamn Collection [46] and a piece in the Kaiser Friederich Museum [47]. Neither in pattern nor color and not even in technique of weaving do these pieces show any real kinship with the Dragon carpets. They belong to northwest Persia as

[41] Illustrated Valentiner, op. cit. No. 5.
[42] Illustrated, Martin, op. cit. Fig. 270, Bode-Kuehnel, op. cit. Abb. 63, Valentiner, op. cit. No. 2.
[43] Illustrated, Martin, op. cit. Fig. 294.
[44] A good example of this type is now in the possession of D. K. Kelekian, N. Y. and is illustrated in Meisterwerke, op. cit. Tafel 68, while another of the same class is illustrated in Bode-Kuehnel, op. cit. Abb. 58.
[45] Illustrated, Meisterwerke, op. cit. Tafel 67, Valentiner, op. cit. No. 22, Bode-Kuehnel, op. cit Abb. 57.
[46] Illustrated Martin, op. cit. Pl. 1.; Meisterwerke, op. cit. 66.

Martin indicates in his captions and judging from their modern derivatives were very likely woven in the Karadagh region. To include such rugs with the Dragon type is to confuse the classification and increase the difficulty of tracing its subsequent history. An unambiguous starting point is necessary if we are to plot securely the gradual modifications of the Dragon type as it passed through succeeding generations of weavers and thus folow its development close enough to the present to get real evidence of its original provenance.

By thus starting with the three classes of Dragon carpets, we can by an analysis of their essential characteristics; their patterns, devices of drawing, colors, materials and weaving technique, make a sound extension of the general type to include as genuinely continuous with the earliest pieces still a fourth class. This class consists of such carpets as those illustrated by Jacoby in Tafels 13, 14, 15, 16 and such pieces as that illustrated in the old Vienna book, and in Martin [48]. There are many fine examples of this class of rugs in America and they seem to date from about 1700 to the first half of the nineteenth century.

These later carpets of the fourth class show many unmistakable affinites to well established types of Caucasus rugs. We find in a number of them the so-called oak leaf and wine cup border so characteristic of Shirvan rugs; and many other distinctive the such as scattered decorative trifles, combs, horses, dogs, detached blossoms, so common in Daghestan weavings and in other parts of the Caucasus. But the argument hardly needs to be pressed. That these later pieces belong to the Caucasus no one has ever doubted and in view of their similarity to the early Dragon pieces in technique and the continuous development of the designs, easily exhibited where sufficient examples can be assembled to cover the periods involved, we seem compelled to assume that the earlier pieces are likewise indigenous to the Caucasus.

A fifth class even which still further strengthens the argument for the Caucasus attribution, can perhaps be established of which the Smith carpet, which was woven since the middle of the nineteenth century, is a sufficiently good illustration. That this rug, despite its Armenian inscription is actually from the Caucasus there can be no doubt at all. Hundreds of pieces of this type are known and scores have been taken from the looms in the vicinity of Kuba and Chila within the memory of living men. Such rugs also mark the culmination of one branch of the original Dragon carpets. An older but closely related piece is in the South Kensington Museum [49], probably woven about the begining of the nineteenth century [50], while the earliest known example of this group is in the Austrian State collection [51]. This later piece, which must be as early as the first half of the seventeenth century, shows many close affiliations with the Dragon pieces of the second group [52].

[47] Illustrated Martin, op. cit. Fig. 272.

[48] Orientalische Teppiche, op. cit. Pl. XXII and Martin. op. cit. Fig. 304. This carpet will be republished in color in the new Vienna book: Altorientalische Teppiche, herausgegeben vom Österreichischen Museum für Kunst und Industrie, bearbeitet von Friedrich Sarre und Ernst Trenkwald. Wien-Leipzig 1925.

[49] Illustrated Martin, op. cit. Fig. 299. Cf. also, Kendrick and Tattersall, Guide to the Collection of Carpets in the Victoria and Albert Museum, Pl. XXV.

[50] It is not very difficult to determine the approximate period of these pieces as quite a number of dated examples are known coverning the first three quarters of the Nineteenth Century.

[51] This important carpet will be shortly published in the new Vienna book: op. cit.

[52] The carpet referred to in note 48 as well as a similar piece formerly in the possession of Tiffany Studios, N. Y. are closely related to this piece although there are striking pattern differences. All three carpets have borrowed from the Vase carpet the large lily or calyx figure that is such a conspicuous feature in this type.

The patterns of these carpets consist principally of large round or oval rosettes combined with sets of four rather clumsy arabesques with small blossoms and akward thick stems and leaves filling the interstitial spaces all semi detatched and angular; the later pieces contain star like palmettes which take the place of the lotus palmettes of the ealier examples[55]. These star patterns are very common in various types of Daghestan rugs, particularly those of the Kuba district from the latter part of the eighteenth century down to the present day. All of the other patterns, even the arabesques, are to be found in the early Dragon carpets. The Dragons and the lattice-like leaf patterns are missing, but the Dragons early disappeared from these weavings and are not even on the Gohar carpet, and as for the leaf forms there would be no difficulty in arranging a series of examples showing the gradual shortening and their increasing restriction until they become an ordinary large lancet leaf or a mere frame work for the big palmettes, as in the Gohar and Lydig carpets, or as in many cases disappear altogether. That the Smith rug and the South Kensington rug and most of the type are on a blue ground while most of the Dragon carpets are on a red ground does not invalidate the argument. In the first place there are Dragon carpets of the early type on a similar dark blue ground, of which an excellent example is owned by Bachstitz of the Hague and in the second place many examples in this series, such as a carpet in the Bardini Museum in Florence and even many later pieces, are on the typical rose red ground that we find in the Dragon carpets.

Much more important than the relationship in pattern is the identity in consruction between these so-called „Blue Kubas" and the Dragon carbets. Both, with the exception of the very late examples, are woven on coarse, heavy irregular wool warps with one string much depressed which gives a ridged appearance to the back. The red or brownish dyed weft threads are also rather stiff and the combination makes such a hard and thick foundation that the relatively sparse pile always shows signs of hard wear.

But it must not be supposed that there is no connection between the early Dragon carpets and the Caucasus except that shown by a connection with these later examples. The argument that in quality of wool, of knotting and of color the earliest pices show characteristics that are found only in the Caucasus is quite sound and has long been the contention of American collectors and dealers. Not only are the reds, yellows and blues as well as the much discussed violet of the early pieces found in exactly the same shades in the Caucasus rugs of the early Nineteenth Century, but there is also a shade of deep, clear emerald green in the best of the early pieces which can be exactly matched in some of the older Kazak rugs and which is hardly to be found in this precise tone anywhere else in the Orient.

Quite as significant also is the fact that many kinds of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century rugs from all over the Caucasus not directly related to the Dragon carpets or their derivatives have reproduced more or less faithfully some of the characteristic patterns of the Dragon type. We constantly find the same kind of field divisions, the employment of degenerate Dragon forms, the building up of whole patterns out of subordinate features such as the large rosettes of the Dragon carpets and, in the case of the Kazak and Tcherkess rugs, the exact and literal copying of

[55] This desigu must not be confused with a somewhat similar combination of patterns derived from the Herat region which since Riegl's time has been called the »Joshaghan Design« althought it was neither devised nor woven there. The pattern became popular in western Persia in the eighteenth century and was woven in great numbers in the Kurdish districts as well as in the Karabagh region and to some extent in the vicinity of Kuba. This pattern may have influenced the development of the »Blue Kuba« in its evolution from the Dragon designs, but the resemblance is rather superficial and there is probably no other connection.

the central pattern of such carpets as that in the Lydig Collection. (See Illustration.) Moreover there are in America two carpets woven with the materials and the technique that characterise the finest Daghestans, the so called Kabistans, that copy as closely as an Eighteenth Century weaver could be expected to do the early Dragon style (cf. III. 4). These Caucasus weavers copying Dragon carpets in whole or in part, must have had their models close at hand, not off in Armenia, a relatively short but rather diffiicult journey. Moreover, the ordinary weavers dwelling close to the Caucasus Mountains are conservative and do not wander far afield for their patterns but keep close to that which they are used to and see about them. In this respect they are wholly unlike the Kurds who borrow all sorts of designs from widely scattered sources.

Another important indication that the Dragon carpets are really of Caucasus origin is to be found in the very closely related embroideries. These pieces follow the Dragon carpets, particularly those of the third type, quite faithfully in pattern and in color. Several pieces in the Myers collection and especially one in the Ballard collection are as close to the Dragon designs as would be possible in an embroidery especially in view of the fact that most of there are eighteenth century productions. There are even striking affiliations, especially in the animal drawing between a piece in the south Kensington and the Metropolitan rug with the serrated concentric bands, pieces that must be at least a century apart. Although the problem of these embroideries has not yet been definitely cleared up, those of the geometrical type, in contrast to those with the personnages and to those in light colors, seem certainly to have come from the Caucasus. It is from this region that they have been gathered in greatest numbers and specific pieces can be traced back to the possession of families residing in the mountainous districts west of Kuba[54] (Ill. 5)[55].

Although these arguments in behalf of the Caucasus origin of the Dragon carpets are necessarily brief and dogmatic and are not intended to constitute scientific proof, nevertheless in conjunction with the arguments advanced already they create a strong presumption in favor of a Caucasus provenance in place of the Armenian hypothesis for which there is really nothing to be said. Such problems as the origins of the characteristic patterns of these carpets, their development and degeneration the technical details of their weaving and their aesthetic significance must wait for later discussion.

The situation in regard to the provenance of Dragon carpets is rather more serious than if it were merely the question of the identification of a certain species of rugs. The insubstantial arguments advanced by Martin met no challenge for fifteen years. The obscure and difficult history of Oriental carpets will never be properly deciphered unless there is a more frank and vigorous give and take among the scholars in the field. Nor is the problem of the Dragon carpets an isolated instance of this lethargy. Three years ago Dr. Sarre published an important article demonstrating the Cairene origin of Damascus carpets, a thesis since confirmed by additional evidence. If the arguments in behalf of new attributions, and the ciriticism of old cannot be met they should be acknowledged and accepted with reasonable promptness, so that some degree of finality can be attained and scholars will be encouraged to further research.

[54] While there are a few eighteenth century attempts to copy Persian animal and flower carpets they are rare and unsuccessful.

[55] For illustration in color of an excellent fragment of one of there embroideries cf. Werner Grote-Hasenbalg, Der Orientteppich, seine Geschichte und seine Kultur. Berlin 1922, Band I, Blatt IX. A particularly large and fine group of ibese embroideries belongs to George Hewitt Myers.

[56] Mr. Cerof Filippo secured a half dozen pieces in Baku about twenty years ago and several from private possession in the mountains to the west.

Illus. 6. Tapestry-Carpet with Armenian inscription. 17th century.

Sammlung Ph. Holzmann, Berlin.